AN ACCOUNT OF Saint Sebastian.

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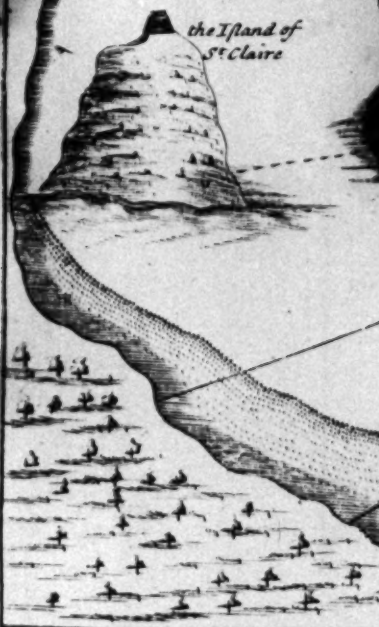

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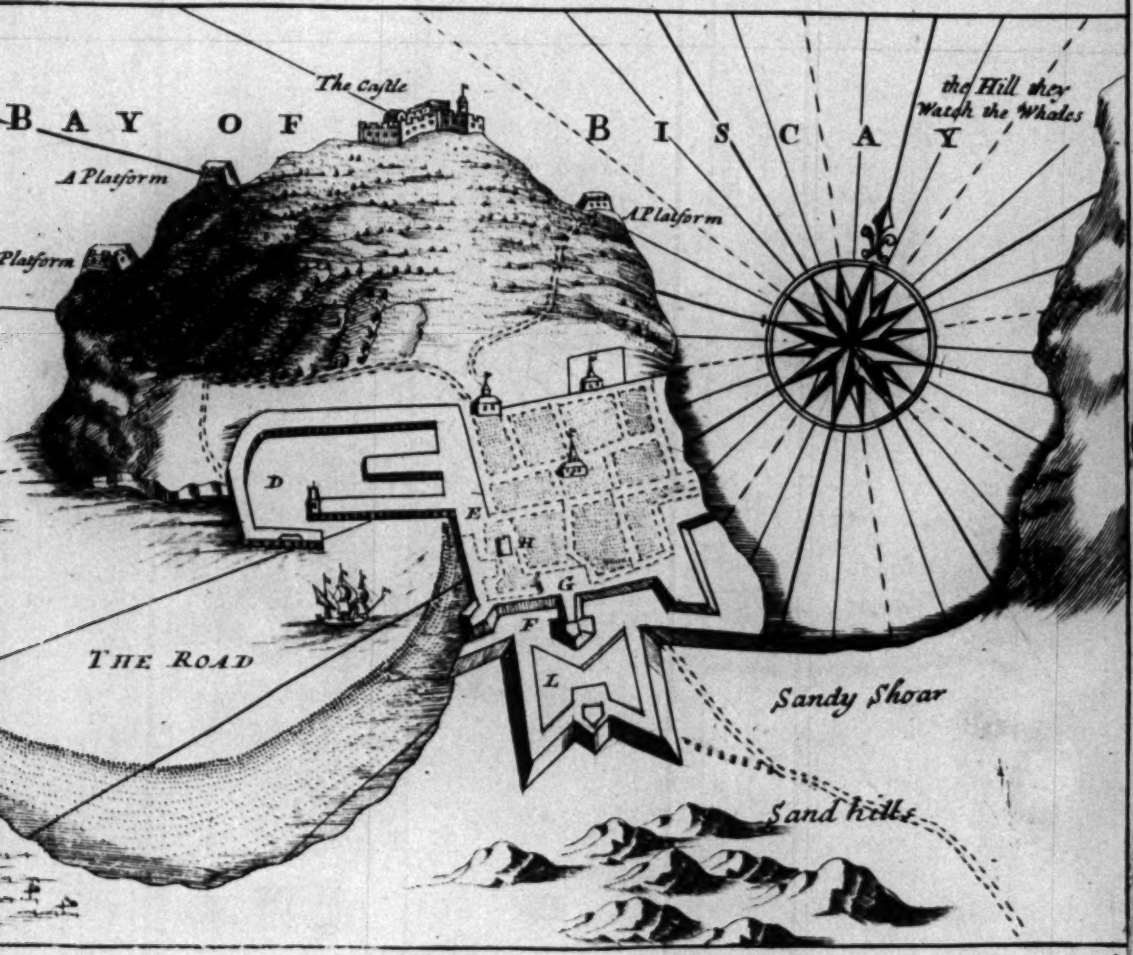
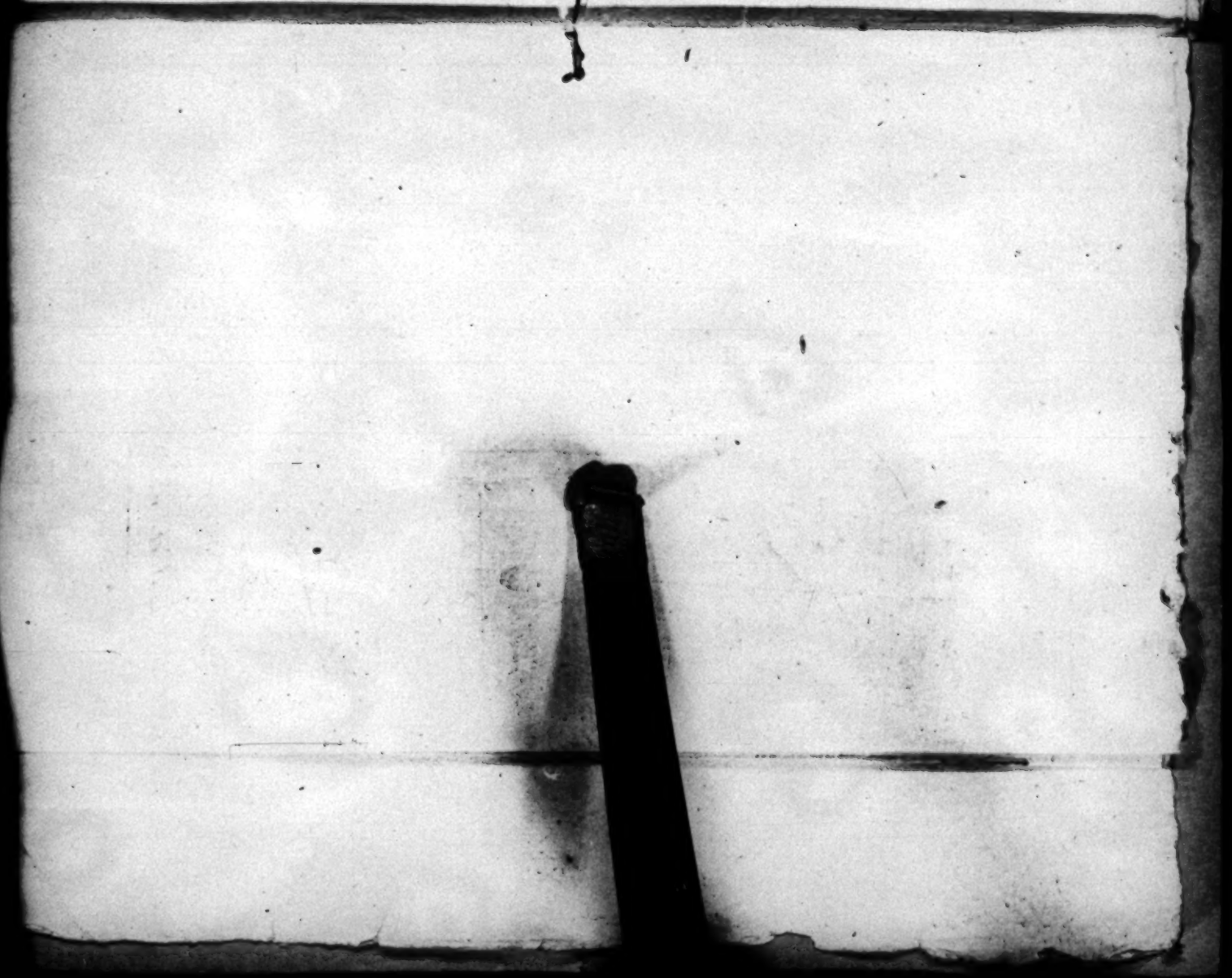


the Peer Gate . F the Passage Gate : G the Market place : H the Town house and Magazine: L & horn



AN ACCOUNT OF Saint Sebastian, IN

Relation to their *GOVERNMENT, CUSTOMS* and *TRADE.*

With a Draught of the Place.

By one lately come from thence.

LONDON:

Printed by *Hugh Newman*, and are to be sold by *A. Baldwin*, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane.* 1700.

A N

ADVENTURER.

I N

FOUR PARTS.

With a Dauphin of the Seas.

LONDON:

Printed by Hugh Meurs, and are to be Sold by
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Lane. 1700.

AN ACCOUNT, &c.

SAint *Sebaſtian* in the Province of *Guipoſcoa*, in the Kingdom of *Caſtile*, is a free Town, in manner of a Republick; ſubjected to the Crown *Caſtile*, on Conditions approved on by the Kings of *Spain*: And in all their Writings, they ſtyle it,

The Moſt Noble and Moſt Loyal City of Saint Sebaſtian.

The Kings of *Spain*, have given them this Title for the ſervices they did the Crown.

The Province of *Guipoſcoa* enjoys great Priviledges, and do not obey the Kings Orders, when that which is required of them, is contrary to

the Priviledges and Liberties of the Province. Which is Governed thus,

Every Year there is a Convocation or Aſſembly, whether every Town does ſend their Deputies to Concert Affairs relating to their County or Province. Their Meeting is in four different places by turns, and they are call'd.

Saint *Sebaſtian*, *Toloza*, *Aſpeytia* and *Aſcoytia*.

The head or chief of ſuch that are choſen for the Governing this Province, is a Judge Call'd *Corrigidor*, who is as Lord *Lieutenant* of a County, or *Intendant* of a Province. It's to him the King ſends his Orders to be Executed in the County. Beſides this *Corrigidor*, There is choſen for the Governing the ſaid Province a *Deputation* (ſo called by the *Spaniards*) conſiſting of ſeveral repreſentatives of the ſeveral places in the ſaid Province, who have Power of refuſing the Kings Orders ſerved to them by the *Corrigidor*, if that any ſuch Orders or Commiſſion preſented them are againſt the Rights of the *Deputation*, or places whom they repreſent; But if the Kings Commiſſion or Orders to the *Corrigidor*, does not contradict the Rights of the *Deputation*, they let him put them in Execution to the full. For Example, When

When the King asks of the ſaid Province to ſupply him with a certain number of Men, either Landmen, or Seamen; The *Corrigidor* ſerves the Kings Orders to the Province and acquaints the *Deputation*: They tell him they are a free people, and that they cannot oblidge any Inhabitant to leave his Family to ſerve the King: But when they find that the demand is not againſt their Liberties and Rights, they are ſo civil to give the King leave to order Drum to be beat, and they will not oppoſe it; otherwiſe they do as in the Caſe of the *Corrigidor* Duke *Corſano* a few years ago, who requiring of this Province of *Guipoſcoa*, and in particular of the City of Saint *Sebaſtian*, ſome things contrary to their Priviledges (which I ſhall not mention) They preſented their *Leij Secundo*, or Charter in one hand and a Sword in the other, with Orders to him in four hours to leave the Province, the Duke was fain to ſcowr for it.

The Government of the City of Saint *Sebaſtian*, whoſe Magiſtrates are choſen once a Year, about a week before *Chriſtmas*, is thus.

There is about an hundred Electors, who muſt be qualified as you'll hear hereafter (for no body can be of the Government of Saint *Sebaſtian*, nor

the Priviledges and Liberties of the Province. Which is Governed thus,

Every Year there is a Convocation or Aſſembly, whether every Town does ſend their Deputies to Concert Affairs relating to their County or Province. Their Meeting is in four different places by turns, and they are call'd.

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nor of the Province, nor indeed of the leaſt Village, till he has proved his *Higuidalquir*, *Viz.* (That he is Noble).

Their Magiſtrates are choſen thus.

There is a great Silver Bowl, into which is put confuſedly all the Electors Names: The firſt eight that a Boy (like one of our Blew Coat Boys) takes out, are thoſe who are to be *Alcaijde*, *Subalcaijde*, *Syndect*, Magiſtrates and Jurates for the following Year.

Theſe eight Name every one of them, one to be *Alcaijde* and *Subalcaijde*, the firſt two of theſe eight, the Boy takes out, are *Alcaijd* and *Subalcaijd*, the firſt *Alcaijde*, the ſecond *Subalcaijde*, and ſo after the ſame manner of the *Syndect* and other Officers.

Notwithſtanding this fair way of chooſing their Magiſtrates, there is Faction and Intereſt made to get in their friends into the Magiſtracy, they are generally very poor, diſpiſing Induſtry and Arts; and when they come to Govern or to be *Alcaijde*, have opportunities of exacting even upon their own people as well as ſtrangers, and which they make no ſcruple of doing in the face

of

of the World. I could relate ſeveral particulars to my Knowledge, but that I ſhould expoſe them too much: and indeed, it would hardly be believed that ſuch tricks and little things were practiſed in *Spain*, where every one from the higheſt to the loweſt, value themſelves on their Families, Nobility and *Punctilio's* of Honour.

In order to be thus qualified to get into the Government (as I ſaid before),

They muſt be Noble.

Their Nobility is thus, not to have had any of their Kindred a *Jew*, *Moor*, *Turk*, or *Heretick*.

And to prove this, the Perſon that would be of the Government, preſents a requeſt to the Province of *Guipoſcoa*, in which is explained his intention, and asks to be a *Cavallero Dillegenzero*, *Viz.* That his Birth and Eſtate may be enquired into, in order to his being made a Nobleman.

The Province or Town orders their *Syndect*, whoſe buſineſs it is to enquire into his Family (and for which he has a Piſtol a day) to go to

 the

the place of his Birth along with him, and there take both private, as well as publick informations of his Family, which afterwards he reports to the Province or Magiſtrates of the place, where ſuch a one would be of the Government; if the report is allowed, the *Cavallero Dilligenzero*, is declared Noble.

Beſides theſe qualifications already mentioned.

There is one yet very remarkable and without it, if they were deſcended from *Cæſars* or *Achilles* Race, they cannot be Noble, *Viz.*

If they live, or are to live in Town, they muſt have a Houſe of their own, or elſe they muſt have Land enough in the Province whereon they have two Thouſand Apple-Trees, or whereon they may raiſe two Thouſand Apple-Trees, and then the *Cavallero Dilligenzero*, is admitted and made Capable of being admitted into the Government. No Man can be Noble by his Wife, or by her Eſtate:

The Town of Saint *Sebaſtian*, is ſeated, as you ſee by the Draught, on the *South* ſide, and at the bottom of a high Hill of Freeſtone in a ſquare form, the Town is hid by the Hill as you make towards

towards the Land and is not to be ſeen, till you are in the Road.

There are two Gates, that of the *Peer*, and the other that's called the *Paſſage Gate*, from which, goes a Road to *Paſſage*, a Noble Harbour; There is a Horn work with a Ravelin before it that covers the *Paſſage Gate*, and but very ordinary and in ill repair, and out of all due Proportion.

The Caſtle upon the top of the Hill ſtands prettily, a Noble Proſpect from it all along that part of the *Bay* of *Biſcay*, from *Cape Martinchauco* to *Arkaſon* and *Cabritton* in *France*. The going up, or acceſs to this Caſtle is difficult, which adds to the ſtrength of it, and I think all that can be ſaid juſtly of this Caſtle is this, and that is all. Altho the *Spaniards* are extream Proud of it, and quote you *Charlequin*, who ſaid in Praiſe of it (if you'll believe them) that if he ſhould looſe all *Spain*, and had only the Caſtle of Saint *Sebaſtian*, he would recover it.

The Caſtle was blown up by the *Magaſines* taing fire, but is now rebuilt and in good repair; all the Water in the Caſtle is rain Water, which is Conveyed into a Well by Leaden Pipes from

the Roof of the Guard Room, and *Barraques*, which are indeed very fine and capable of Lodging two Thouſand Men Conveniently.

The Garriſon at preſent, conſiſts of a Sergeant and ſix Men, which by detachment from the main Guard (which does not conſiſt of above twelve, beſides a Governour, Captain, Lieutenant and Enſign) is relieved every day by the like number, and by ſometimes a leſſer. The Souldiers are all beggars, and if a ſtranger refuſes to give them ſomething, they contrive to do him miſchief.

There are two Platforms mounted with Guns, I ſuppoſe deſigned to ſecure the Harbour and Play on Ships that would force themſelves into the Road, they are too high to be of any uſe to them, as well as the Caſtle for this purpoſe.

In the mouth of the Harbour there is a Hill called Saint *Claire*, where there was three months ago a *Hermit* of the order of Saint *Francis*, who tells twenty Legends and Stories, and helps to fill the Casks with Wine, as he muſt live by begging, ſo the Poor old fellow will be every day as drunk as a beggar; for this reaſon they ſay, they turned him out of his Cell, but it's believed

rather

rather it was to make room for one that is now there, a Gentleman of a conſiderable Eſtate in the Kingdom of *Caſtile*, for reaſons, he has his Eſtate taken from him, and is confined to this *Iſland* as a *Hermit*, to beg his Bread for fourteen Years, and then returns to his Eſtate again: The Church and Clergy enjoys his Eſtate in the mean-time.

All that Dye *Hereticks* are buried here; when the Corps is carried out of Town to be wafted over to this *Iſland* to be Buried, the Mob of Men and Women follow Inſulting over the Corps, Crying aloud, *He goes to Hell.* The *Hermit* has the benefit of the ground on his *Iſland* and ſells it as he thinks fit.

To give the Clergy their due, they are not ſo troubleſome to ſtrangers when they are ſick and a dying, altho *Hereticks*, with their extream Unction and Wafers as in *France.*

The coming into the Road, and over the *Bar* of Saint *Sebaſtian* is difficult, unleſs with a leading Wind, a great Rock lies under Water in the middle of the *Bar.*

But to run no hazard, the Pilots will force themſelves on board of you, which is commendable enough if it was not on deſign to impoſe upon you, and make one pay what they pleaſe and no help for it, nor no Juſtice done if you complain. The *Conſul* and *Merchant* ſtrangers reſiding at Saint *Sebaſtian*, have brought them to ſome better reaſon and to Compoſition, but for all that, it is ſtill as they pleaſe, every Fiſherman looks upon himſelf as good as *Signior Alcaijde* himſelf; So that a Man muſt ſit down under all affronts and hardſhips and be quiet.

Their way of living at Saint *Sebaſtian.*

People that are of the better ſort and diſtinguiſhable, after having enjoyed the Muſick of *Serenading* little before day, they get up and drink Chocolet, without which they would not ſtir abroad if their houſe was on fire, then they take, both Men and Women, a great deal of pains with their hair, dreſs themſelves and go to Church, they and their Prieſts underſtand what they Pray to God for much alike, for not one of twenty of their Clergy underſtands *Latin.*

After

After Maſs the Men go to the *Peer*, where they tarry till eleven of the Clock, then they go to the middle of the Town called the four *Corners*, where they ſtay till twelve, after it has ſtruck, if it was to ſave the Town they would not ſtay a minute longer, and oftentimes break off in the middle of a Story or ſentence, to go home to their *Olio*. The firſt thing preſented at their Tables is a Chocolet Cup of Soup, or the gravey of meat boiled and Bread crumbled into it, ſerved upon Earthen Platters, then comes the Roaſt Meat, then the Boiled, and at laſt the deſert.

They give this reaſon of bringing the Roaſt Meat before the Boiled (which ſeems plauſible enough) the beſt of the Boiled Meat ſay they is in the broth, and there is more ſubſtance and nouriſhment in the Roaſt than in the Boyled, for that reaſon, this would paſs if they did not ſpoil their Roaſt Meat and Fowl by over-doing of them, and Roaſting them dry as they do their Boiled Meat, by Boiling it to Pieces.

But moſt people think it's rather in oppoſition to the reſt of the World, for they ſhow it almoſt in every little thing elſe; Syder they have cheap, and abundance of ſweet Apples very large all round

round the Country. The Corn of the Country is *Indian* Corn and no other, with Wheat they are ſupplied from the *Sound* and ſometimes from *Barbary*, and often from *England*; They have been ſo hard put to it this laſt Year, that they have been forced to make Bread of Cheſnuts, which is the reaſon they are Prohibited to be Exported. They have extraordinary good Rabbits of *Navar* and Wild Fowl plenty, their Pidgeons are much eſteemed, and their red Partridge of *Arragon*, are excellent and large.

Fiſh they have plenty and of good ſorts, if they'll be at the pains to catch it, and if the Sea, (which with a *North-Weſt* blowing wind flyes high on the *Bar*, and even up almoſt to the top of the *Iſland* Saint *Clair*, about ſix hundred Foot) will permit; the Sea oftentimes in the Harbour flyes to the top of the Walls forty Foot high and more.

When the Fiſhermen come from Sea with their Boats, their Wives are ſitting on the *Peer* with their Husbands Cloaks and long Spadas, or long Rapiers, the Husband walks in State into the Town, and his Wife carries the Basket of Fiſh on her head to the Market place and ſells them. Billingſ-gate Language and Noiſe is nothing to what

what the Fiſher-Men and Apple-Women make at Saint *Sebaſtian*, they are always Quarrelling and will Cuff heartily, and will not be friends under a Week. Their common language is *Baſque*, which is as much different from *Spaniſh* as *Welch* from *Engliſh*.

Their Houſes are Lofty and Stately, only covered with Pan-tiles, and becauſe of great unexpected Squales of Wind which happen here often, they lay great ſtones on the Pan-tiles to keep them faſt, ſometimes both Stones and Pan-tiles are fetched down by Storms of Wind, and their ſtreets being narrow, it is dangerous then to walk the ſtreets. Their rooms are large, but only one Chimney in a Houſe of five rooms of a floor, and four or five ſtories high, and that at the top of the Houſe. They live all Winter in the upper Stories to enjoy the benefit of the Sun, and in the lower Rooms in Summer. It is very hot here, the reflection of the Sun from the Caſtle Hill on one hand, and from the Sand in the Vale on the other, is the cauſe that it is hotter here than in many places of a more *Southern* Latitude. Their Beds are finely Carved and Gilded, but very hard to lye on, their Curtains, are of Linnen Laced at every half yard broad, but not wide enough to draw round the Bed, they have few or no Glaſs Windows, only Latices, their Beds ſtand all in *Alcoves*.

Merchant ſtrangers unleſs Married with a *Spaniſh* Woman, have not the Liberty to hire Houſes, but muſt get one of the Town to hire them, and live in it with him, and they generally go ſnacks with the Merchants in their profits.

From Dinner they go to ſleep till two or three, and then go out of Town between the *Horn-Work* and the *Town Wall*, there they tarry all the Afternoon, either Playing, or looking on thoſe that play at Tennis and Ninepins: Their Tennis Court is in the open Air and rough Paved, yet they are very expert in toſſing the Ball.

In the Winter they paſs their time till eight of the Clock at Night in private Houſes, or at an Aſſembly, where every one that comes in, Pays ſix pence; he may either pick up a party to Play at Cards, or ſit and ſee others Play, and Talk, and Call for three or four Glaſſes of Wine; if they ſtay beyond eight, the Mayor ſends his *Algoſins*, and makes Money of the Company, as well as of him that entertains them after ſuch an hour. Sometimes the Clock ſtrikes eight when it is but ſeven, if the Mayor wants a little Money.

The

The Men are very tight in their *Spaniſh* Garb, their long Spadas, their ſilk ſtockings and flaſh'd ſhoes; the Women modeſtly and odly attired, all of them go Vailed, their Vails very large, gathered at the bottom in ſuch a manner, that as they walk their Vails ſit as full blown about them as the Sails of a Ship before the Wind; their petticoats are proportionable, and the Ladies, who generally all ſit on the ground or floor, have ſuch an addreſs when they ſit down to fling their Petticoats out in a round, that modeſtly ſpeaking, they take up more room than any Milſtone in *England* does in circumference, and the Wind gathered under their Coats by the turn they make, is ſo long of getting out, that by degrees as their Coats fall, they find a cool breeſe that is very refreſhing to them in ſo hot a Climate: They ſeldom ſtir abroad, the better ſort but to Church, and even then not without a great deal of Jealouſie of an ill natur'd Husband; they have pretty Faces, black Eyes, and would look about them, as Women do in other Countreys if they durſt.

The Prieſts are the only happy Men that enjoy the Ladies Company; Who are about eighty in all, their revenue is but ſmall, they live merry lives, eat and drink of the beſt, in private Houſes, where they are

always welcome, few or none of them, but have three or four Children and no reflection on them.

When a Prieſt would lay with a Woman, he abſolves her from the great ſcruple Women make of Whoredoms being a great ſin, he tells her he'll take that ſin to himſelf; as for the other ſcruple that Women have of looſing their reputation and ſpoiling their fortunes, there is no ſuch thing amongſt them, for if a Man gets a Woman with Child, that does not paſs for a Proſtitute, he is only to keep the Child and give the Wench a Portion (if ſhe has nothing of her own) who Marries and is not a bit the worſe looked upon.

Women have another advantage in this Countrey, for after they are Contracted and all matters ſettled, and the day of Marriage agreed on; ſhe has the Liberty to deſire her Bridegroom to come and ſhow himſelf a Man: and if ſhe does not find him to her ſatisfaction the Contract is void, and ſhe's a good Maid ſtill.

They

They bring up ſome of their Young Women to Play on the *Spaniſh* Harp, for which they let their Nails grow ſo long that it looks ſtrangely.

They do not allow of any Bawdy Houſes, but every ſtreet, in a dark Night, ſerves their turn, and he muſt look to himſelf that diſturbs them, or ſpoils ſport.

Every Sunday and Holiday, the ordinary ſort of them have a Dance on the Market Place, thus,

There are three Drums and Pipes, the Drum Major who has the bigeſt Drum, which is about the bigneſs of a childs Drum, is the common Hangman; there they whiſtle with one hand, and beat their Drums with the other, till there is a Ring made, when one of the nimbleſt of the fellows goes into the middle of the Ring, ſhows his Activity, takes out of the Ring a Wench, ſhe her Mate, and ſo it goes round; the firſt fellow leads the brandle, and all Dance and ſhow their Parts for an hour. The Coopers, who are numerous here, on Saint *Andrews-Day* their Patron, go a Maskquerading all Day, and Play twenty tricks ridiculous enough, and would not work that day

day for any reward, but they make it up at other times, for they are at work before day.

The Country all round abounds with Oak, proper for the Staves, and Chesnut Trees, of which they make the Hoops, for Cask; there is also great Numbers of Cask made in the Country, and at *Passage*, and brought to Saint *Sebastian* empty on Mules.

There is near to the Town the Convent of Saint *Austin*, a Nunnery of Women, where there is to be seen the Corps of a Woman dead hundreds of years ago, her Arms, Legs and Face, appears as full as if she had been Buried but yesterday; she looks Tawny, and I believe has been served *Mummy*-like; when they were digging the Foundation of this Monastery they found this Corps, which they pray to.

The chief Trade of the Town is Iron, Wine and Oyl.

Their Iron Mills are near to the Town, and their Iron Bars are brought to the Town on Horses or Mules, on Crooksaddles to the publick *Magasine*, which is under the Town Hall, where constant

constant attendance is given for receiving it out of the Country, and delivering and weighing it to the Buyer. Our Tin Men in *Cornwall* are here supplyed with their ſtamps, and other Utenſils for the carrying on their work.

All other Merchandiſes, except Iron, are drawn on Sledges, by two Oxen, in and out of the Town.

They deal ſomewhat in train Oyl and Whalebone, they have ſome Ships that go to the *North-ward* a Whale fiſhing, beſides they catch ſome in ſight of the Caſtle; and in order to this, ſome Months in the Year, they hire a Man that looks out continually from the top of the Hill, betwixt Saint *Sebaſtian* and *Paſſage*, who when he ſees a Whale or Bottlenoſe, makes a ſign to the Caſtle, the Sentinal from the Caſtle advertiſes, by his Bell, the Town, immediately the Fiſhermen upon that go forth to the Prey; There was a Botlenoſe, about the bigneſs of that which was brought up to *Greenwich*, brought in to Saint *Sebaſtian* in *November* laſt, out of whom they got a great quantity of that which they call *Sperma Ceti*; the fleſh was boyled to Oyl.

They

They have alſo ſome Trade to *Newfound Land*, but with that ſort of Fiſh (*Cabelau* they call it) they are better ſupplyed from other Nations than by their own Ships.

The great quantity of *Pilchards* caught on the Coaſt of *Galicia*, is a mighty help to this part of *Spain*, of which they are great *Lovers*, and are in more eſteem with them than *Herrings*.

But the more remarkable Trade of the Town at preſent, and that which brings moſt Money to the Town, is the Wine Trade.

The late War with *France*, from whence we were ſupplyed with their excellent *Grave Medoc* and *Pontack* Wines, occaſioned our Parliament to put ſuch a great Duty on *French* Wines, and other Liquors of the Growth of *France*; that Merchants have looked out how to be ſupplyed otherwiſe, that they may pay eaſier Duties; and luckily they have light upon a ſpot of ground, Called the *Spaniſh Navar*, of which *Panplone*, *Ablitas* and *Villa Franka*, are the chief Towns, that affords us as good Wines as any *French* Wines; and the *Spaniards* of late both at Saint *Sebaſtian*, *Paſſage*, *Fonteravia* and *Guitaria*, finding ſuch a demand

demand for Wines, and conſiderable profit by them, have improved their Vineyards to ſo great a degree, both in quantity as well as quality of good Wines, that their improvement equals, if not exceeds that of *Portugal*; which before the War was not able to furniſh us with above three or four hundred Pipes in a Year, and now there is above ten Thouſand Pipes a Year Imported from thence, which appears from the Cuſtom Houſe Books.

This will not be allowed by ſome, but it is very true: one ſhall ſee at Saint *Sebaſtian* Mules by hundreds Loaded with Wine in Hogskins, three skins upon a Mule containing ten Gallons each, come every day into Town (Sunday not excepted) all this is unloaded in the Magazines and ſorted, and next day put into Cask, the Mules carry away the empty skins into the Country for more.

This is not only done at Saint *Sebaſtian*, but alſo at *Fonteravia*, *Paſſage*, and *Guitaria*, from theſe places they come to Saint *Sebaſtian* in *Barques*, and *Bargo Longos*, (becauſe of the Conveniency of Sea Carriage) in Cask, and are Lodged in Merchants Cellers ready for the buyer.

The truth of all this is so well known in *England*, from the care the Commissioners of the Customs took, in sending over two of their Officers to examin into the truth of it, and from some Tryals at the *Exchequer Bar*, that it cannot be further questioned.

Besides, for all Wines Ship'd off from Saint *Sebastian*, the Masters of Ships are obliged to take Certificates from the Mayor and Consul, as a sufficient Testimony that their Wines are of the Growth of *Navar*, in his Catholick Majesties Dominions, given under the great Seal of the

Most Noble and Most Loyal City of Saint Sebastian.

And undesigned by their Sworn Master Cooper, *Signior Nicola* and his Assistants, that the very Cask are made by them.

FINIS.